

The image of a healthcare manager today p.II

(Współczesny obraz menadżera służby zdrowia, cz.II)

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Abstract - The authors' focus is on the methods of development and assessment of a manager's skills and functioning. Managerial skills are here linked to the management level. Attention is paid to the modern-day duality of managerial functions.

Key words - managerial skills, duality of managerial functions

Streszczenie – Autorzy skupili się na sposobach rozwoju i oceny funkcji i umiejętności menadżera, powiązali mierności menadżerskie z poziomem zarządzania, zwrócili uwagę na współcześnie występujący dualizm funkcji menadżerskich.

Słowa kluczowe - umiejętności menadżerskie, dualizm funkcji menadżera.

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- G. The idea and the planning of the study
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I. FUNCTIONS AND SKILLS OF A MANAGER

Managers who are willing to effectively perform their executive roles must have certain skills understood as relatively permanent ability to apply professional knowledge in practice in order to get the desired result of an action [1-4].

The significance of managerial skills was first emphasised by F.W. Taylor in 1911. However, the precursor of general management rules and manager functions was H. Fayol. He made a distinction between executive skills and managerial skills and emphasised the former grow in significance as hierarchy get more important. The skills and activities defined by H.Fayol, which provided the foundation for specifying managerial functions, were [5-7] :

- technical: the production and manufacture of goods
- commercial: buying resources, selling products,
- financial: obtaining and using capital,
- security: protection of staff and property,
- accounting: keeping a record and calculating costs, profits, financial commitments, organising statistical data and account balances,
- managerial: planning, organising, commanding, coordinating, controlling.

Regardless of market development and management methods, the aforementioned functions remain of significance (Table 3).

Table 3. Fourteen management principles by H. Fayol [8]

1.	Division of work – Specialised employees work faster and more effectively. An instance of this is a modern-day assembly line.
2.	Authority – managers need to give orders to get the work done. Formal authority gives them the right to command the employees. It is, however, not synonymous with enforcing obedience if the managers do not have personal authority as well (e.g. resulting from adequate knowledge).
3.	Discipline – The personnel of an organisation should abide by the rules and regulations of the organisation. Discipline results from good leadership on each of the levels of the organisation as well as from just arrangements (e.g. reward system for higher productivity) and sensibly applied punishments for breaching the rules.
4.	Unity of command – Each employee should receive orders pertaining to one operation from only one person. When an employee has more than one superior to answer to, incongruity of command and interference with authority may take place.
5.	Unity of direction – The actions of an organisation that are supposed to be focused on one aim should be supervised by a single manager who works on the basis of a unified plan.
6.	Subordination of individual interests to the general interest – Under no circumstances should the interests of employees be superior to the interest of the organisation as a whole.
7.	Remuneration – Remuneration should be just – both for employees and employers.
8.	Centralisation – Limiting the role of subordinate employees in decision-making means centralisation, and broadening their role – decentralisation. Ultimately, managers are the ones responsible, but they are at the same time obliged to give their subordinate employees enough authority to do their jobs. The problem is to find the appropriate degree of centralisation each time.
9.	Hierarchy – Each organisation has a hierarchic system of power. Decision-making process starts at the top level of management and reaches the lowest level of the company's employees.
10.	Order – Each object and each person should be at the right place at the right time. Especially the staff should be at the positions that are most appropriate for them
11.	Appropriate treatment of personnel – Managers should be positive and fair towards their subordinates.
12.	Personnel stability – Huge fluctuation of employees affects the functioning of an organisation in a negative way.
13.	Initiative – employees should be free to develop and implement their own plans even if this may cause certain errors.
14.	Esprit de corps – Keeping up the team spirit introduces the air of unity. Even minor factors can contribute to that. Oral communication is often more beneficial than written. It should be applied whenever possible.

Literature mentions many terms and functions that are crucial in the managerial profession; there is between four and a dozen or so of them around. Bearing in mind the fact that discussing all the typologies of managerial skills would be extremely difficult, the authors shall present only some of them.

From the viewpoints of the management needs, four types of skills can be distinguished [8,9]:

- Conceptual skills,
- Administrative skills,
- Technical skills,
- Human relations skills.

Conceptual skills are related to abstract thinking in the categories of predicting and programming strategic actions concerned with the company development and its relationships with international, regional or local environments. This kind of talent is especially desirable at the top level of management, as the development, standstill, collapse of the company as well as the shape of mutual relationships between co-owners, managers and employees are dependent on managers' idea of the company and policies. These skills are reflected in the actions taken in order to reinforce the team spirit among the employees, establishing clear rules of the game, improving quality, searching for customers or clients etc.

Administrative skills are related to running a business or an administrative unit effectively and productively. Skills of this kind are required to make tactical and strategic decisions. Having them is essential both on top and middle management level. Typical actions dependent on administrative skills include: coordinating long-term planning with short-term budget preparation, monitoring the stock, constant market research, debtor control etc.

Technical skills are required when implementing a particular solution and strictly related to specialist knowledge. They make it easier to choose the right method or technique to do a task and accommodate to a position in the company, be it a white-collar or blue-collar one. These skills influence the decision of starting a business, e.g. construction licence and related skills are a basis for starting a private construction company, etc. In large companies, technical knowledge is necessary in middle and first-line management, where one has to be acquainted with the work process, tasks and production technology.

Human relations skills are essential in direct contact between managers and front line employees. The relationship between them determines whether their cooperation would be a creative one in which the employee is encouraged to work more productively or a conflict one related to the employee's decreased activity. In a large company, human relations skills are required mainly in first-line management as the interpersonal contact is a face-to-face one and an employee's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the work, position, salary and the company in general is dependent on it.

In a large company, the skill types are associated with all three management levels. For top management, conceptual and administrative skills play a major part. For middle management, technical skills are crucial whereas human relations skills are most relevant in first-line management. In a middle-sized company, conceptual and administrative skills are essential on the second level. In small companies with one level of management, the owner or manager has to have all types of skills and only in that case can he or she run the company smoothly and effectively.

The correlations between the required skills and management levels discussed above are presented graphically in fig. 3 [9,10].

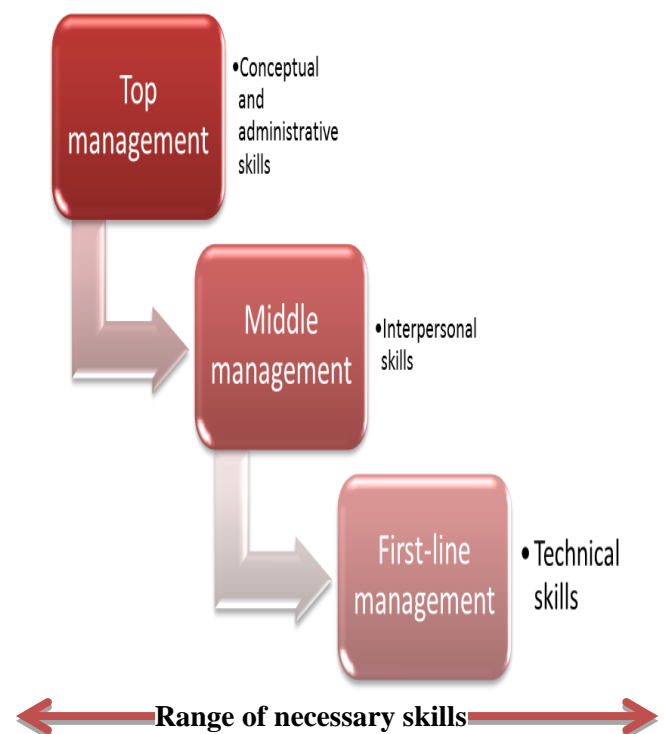


Fig. 3. Managerial skills and management levels [9,10]

Alongside having the skills necessary for successful management, a manager has to implement basic functions based on the rules of management, namely:

- planning the actions,
- organising work,
- managing the subordinate staff,
- hiring, i.e. filling the positions, rotating, evaluating, promoting,
- motivating in order to raise the productivity and effectiveness of the staff,
- controlling the degree to which the planned actions were implemented, introducing corrective operations.

Planning consists in specifying the aims for the organisation and choosing the best possible method to achieve them; it is about purposeful plans for the future and effective ways to implement them, choosing specific aims and working out the best means to achieve them.

Organising is about deploying resources and actions in a logical way and defining the actions which would lead to achieving to company's goals. It consists in grouping the actions that are necessary to be taken and assign them to appropriate organisational units as well as granting those units the authority necessary to execute the plans.

Managing is related not only to the emphasis on seniority and authority but also predominantly on leadership – the ability to influence an employee's work and establish direct cooperation based on partnership. The success of this kind of management is dependent on the authority of the manager or the company owner as perceived by the subordinate staff.

Hiring - this function includes the following objectives:

- assigning right personnel for given positions by means of recruitment, counselling, selection and introduction to work
- assessing the effectiveness and success of given tasks and objectives
- allowing talented employees to train further, broadening their qualifications
- rewarding and promoting the most productive employees

Motivating, i.e. employing various means and mechanisms to make the members of the organisation cooperate

with one another to its benefit; communicating decisions to front line employees in a right way and ensuring these decisions are implemented correctly, with the employees' full commitment to their work and professional duties.

Controlling, i.e. monitoring the progress of the organisation towards the set goals; checking whether the activity of a given unit is in conformity with the assumptions and whether the decisions communicated are implemented.

Along with the changes of the management level, the structure, range and significance of each function changes as well. All the aforementioned functions pertain to every kind of managerial activity, regardless of the position in the hierarchy of an organisation. However, the importance of each function is dependent on the management level concerned. For instance in top management, planning and organising play a central part. The lower the managerial level, the more significant the motivating and controlling functions are. Also, planning and organising are of decreasing relevance as the levels get lower (fig. 4).

Top level managers	PLANNING	ORGANISING	MOTIVATING	CONTROLLING
Middle level managers				
First level supervisors				

Fig. 4. Managerial functions and management levels

[2,10,11]

Presently, one can observe duality in defining managerial functions. On one hand, they can be considered executive functions. On the other, they are leadership functions. It is therefore relevant to specify the level of management they are implemented at. If we take top management (owners, the board, directors) into account, the term one should operate is that of executive functions. As far as middle or first-line management is concerned, the basic function is leadership. It has to be emphasised that general assumptions behind each of these functions are similar regardless of the management level. Significant differences between are related to the range of their application, how detailed or general they are, how complex they are, to what extent they are implemented etc. [12]. As

managerial functions can be numerous and broad, the work of a manager appears undoubtedly time-consuming, requiring sacrifices and – above all - stressful [13-16].

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